

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE | BANGOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERSHIP CENTER

Your COPC e-News
June 2007

Welcome to COPC!

We are pleased to announce our first issue of COPC e-News. The intent of this newsletter is to inform our COPC community about news, events, projects, and each other.

In addition, we have recently launched our COPC website. Please visit us for more information and updates at www.umaine.edu/mcsc/COPC

COPC Overview

The HUD COPC initiative, funded by the Office of University Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is a long-term effort to build strong and sustainable partnerships between the University of Maine and Bangor. The three year grant is designed to build and grow opportunities for partnerships between the community and university. The Bangor-UMaine partnership focuses primarily on three areas: Community Inclusion, Youth Empowerment, and Affordable Housing.

Monthly Feature

For our first newsletter we wanted to offer a snapshot of projects in each of the three focus areas of our COPC grant: Community Inclusion, Youth Empowerment, and Affordable Housing.

Community Inclusion

“The CYBER Project” (Connecting Youth to Bangor and Electronic Resources) partners Shaw House, Bangor’s homeless teen shelter, with the University of Maine to bring youth new media training in the context of life planning and work-skills development. By bringing together UMaine’s New Media Department with the Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS), five modules have been developed so that the first curriculum progressively builds upon the next, while still allowing flexibility for new students to join at any stage.

Led by Professor Owen Smith and Research Associate Janet May, graduate students Andy Hurtt (New Media) and Scott Clement (CCIDS) have been engaging students at the Shaw House every other Wednesday night since mid-February. Their goal is to provide a core curriculum of person-centered planning with higher education aspirations and hands-on skills that involves media tools in imaging, web design, video, etc. “All of the new media

material we use comes from a 270 level course, so at the end of the 5th module, it’s cool to tell them that they have ‘passed’ a University of Maine class,” says Andy.

With the recent addition of four new iMacs with built-in video cameras, Scott says that their work is going well. “It’s been nice to keep seeing some of the same faces. The kids we come in contact with live in the moment and really don’t know what they are going to be doing from one day to the next. They might not know what they are doing Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday nights, but some of them know what they are doing Wednesday nights. One kid even changed her schedule to make time for us.” Now that the kids have gravitated to the technology, Scott adds that he’d like to strengthen more of the academic and job-skill connections.

Community and university COPC partners are welcome to learn the modules while working alongside the youth. Contact Scott (scott.clement@umit.maine.edu) for more details.

Youth Empowerment

Last December local Bangor High School students, under the direction of UMaine doctoral student Jessica Brophy, launched *Common Corner*, the first Bangor newsletter written by youth, for youth. With the guidance of Professor Shannon Martin, the project connects UMaine’s Department of Communication and Journalism with teens from the Salvation Army’s Powerhouse Teen Center.

There also has been strong behind-the-scenes support from the community. The Bangor Public Library, where Jessica and the students meet every week, provided a tour and helped the students obtain their own library cards. As the newsletter was just beginning to take shape last fall, staff from the *Bangor Daily News* visited Jessica and the teens to offer tips on newspaper design and content layout.

Jessica proudly asserts that the newsletter is entirely written by the kids—she’s only there to help them think of possible stories, set up interviews, and offer her expertise in journalism. The feedback from students has been very positive. “I enjoyed distributing the papers and writing the stories. I would like to write more for future issues, meet more often, add artwork and make it bigger.”

The only challenge has been getting kids to break away from their busy academic and athletic schedules to come write. “This is a big project and a lot depends on the interest and commitment of the teens. I hope we can keep the project interesting and fun for students—and also keep them learning about media practices and the world around them.”

Since March, the project has garnered some great media attention, including: a place on the Powerhouse Teen Center website (www.thepowerhouseteencenter.org/); a radio interview on Q 106.5; air time on WLBZ Channel 2 news; a space on the City’s website and their “Did you know” newsletter; a space on the City’s public access channel; and a feature in the Bangor Public Library’s newsletter. From the outreach efforts and the students’ feedback about the project, Jessica is confident that the publication will only get better with time.

New students are always welcome! For more information contact Jessica at Jessica.brophy@umit.maine.edu. To view issues of the Common Corner go to www.umaine.edu/mcsc/COPC/commoncorner.htm.

Student Highlights

Meet our COPC Graduate Students!



Jessica Brophy
(Youth Empowerment)

Jess Brophy is a doctoral student in UMaine’s Department of Communication and Journalism. Originally from Deer Isle, Maine, she earned her undergraduate degree at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Undoubtedly, Jessica has found her passion in this field, “I love studying communication because it impacts every part of our lives from interpersonal relationships to media coverage of world events.”

Since last fall Jessica has been instilling the same sense of enthusiasm in Bangor’s youth. “Working with high school students to create a newsletter has been challenging, but also very rewarding. My main goal has not been to tell them what stories to write, but to subtly share that same sense of excitement about journalism and to hopefully have them become more engaged in the world around us.” Jessica will graduate in 2009 and plans to be a professor so that she may continue to inspire more budding journalists.

Affordable Housing

Since last fall UMaine’s Center on Aging has been convening a wide ranging group of community partners—including residents—to tackle housing issues such as affordability, availability and access. The group is beginning with a needs assessment and then will be identifying collaborative solutions to the most pressing housing problems for the area’s elderly and special needs populations. For more information, go to the Center on Aging’s website: www.umaine.edu/mainecenteronaging/copcresources.htm. You may also subscribe to a housing listserv for participants by sending an email to majordomo@mainecenteronaging.org with the words “Subscribe housing” in the BODY/TEXT of the email (not the subject line).

A second project, under the guidance of UMaine’s Dr. William Davids and engineers and architects from WBRC Architects and Engineers, involves students from the School of Engineering. This summer second-year student Andrew Clark will conduct assessments of the downtown’s infrastructure and walk-ability. Over the coming academic year and in the summer of 2008, civil engineering students will then take these assessments and further develop them into concrete plans for enhancing physical structures and transportation in the downtown.

Together, these two projects will result in a current assessment of how the region is faring, broad recommendations, and concrete ideas for meeting the region’s current and future affordable housing, transportation and service needs.



Anna Mortensen
(Affordable Housing)

Since last July Arizona-native **Anna Mortensen** has been getting acquainted to Maine as she pursues a master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology at UMaine. "It has been a very big change adjusting to small towns and cold weather, however, I am really enjoying both." Anna's undergraduate work at Arizona State University focused on speech and hearing science coupled with studies of therapeutic recreation. After her graduate work is completed in 2008, she plans to pursue her doctorate, "I am especially passionate about advocating for the aging population within the field of Speech-Language Pathology, a career that is often so focused on working with children. I plan to become a university professor so that I can research some of the aging related diseases (strokes, dementia) that have such an impact on communication."

For Anna, the UMaine-Bangor COPC project has been another new learning experience as she gains more exposure about housing issues concerning the elderly and disadvantaged populations. "My work at the Center on Aging has really been a great way for me to become involved in the city and meet people who are doing such great work in all areas of the community."

Andy Hurtt graduated this spring with a master's degree in New Media and Art. Although Andy taught undergraduate classes throughout his program, it has been his exposure to "The CYBER Project" (Connecting Youth to Bangor and Electronic Resources) that has provided him with some of his most valuable graduate school experiences. Meeting new people, witnessing the inner workings of a grant, and teaching transitional youth at Shaw House have all been great learning experiences. "Being flexible and changing plans on the fly was one of the biggest challenges.

Teaching can be difficult enough, but it's especially hard to capture the attention of youth whose interests can change from one second to the next. You have to be able to think on your feet and come up with something new if what you are doing is not working."



Left to Right: Andy Hurtt, New Media Studies & Scott Clement, Counselor Education (Community Inclusion)

This fall Andy will begin a doctoral program at UMaine. Having studied at Rockland Community College in New York and at Montclair State University in New Jersey, Andy has found the right fit, "I love the University and knew that I wanted to work with Owen Smith (Director of New Media), but I would also like to stay in Maine afterward."

For **Scott Clement**, "The CYBER Project" seems tailor-made. Scott earned a degree in Political Science in 2002 from Bates College and, for a short time afterward, tried his hand as a policeman. It was not long before Scott realized that law enforcement wasn't for him. "I liked the concept of community policing and the proactive approach that it takes but in the environment I was in, law enforcement was still a very reactionary profession. You were always talking to people who did not want to talk to you. I knew then, that it was probably time to switch careers."

Scott is working toward a master's degree in counselor education. He eventually plans to be a school guidance counselor. "I like connecting with people and I'd like to think that I also have a keen ability to identify people's interests. The key is to help kids discover what motivates them." Scott applies the same philosophy to his work with Project Life. "Not a lot of attention is given to this population and too often the focus is on college. I think that you can get them turned onto higher education by finding out their interests, showing them the skills they need, and then making that link between college and career."

Faculty Focus

Bill Kuykendall has been leading an effort to develop a documentary of the UMaine-Bangor Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC). His involvement taps many different facets of his personal and professional interests. For Bill, COPC is an opportunity to strengthen his students' involvement in the community so they can begin to see themselves as active consumers, not passive observers of the world around them. "I always want my students to create a narrative that is engaging and informative. Today's technology allows anyone to take part, but good, responsible documentaries put the subject first, and take into consideration the totality of the individual and their experience. The end result should grab the viewer, and be able to move people who didn't think they had an interest."

This past spring Bill Kuykendall and one of his students, Colin McGovern, joined hundreds of other faculty and professionals from around the world to take part in an international conference on Community-University Partnerships at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell <http://www.uml.edu/com/cita/conferenceinfo2007.html>. The two day conference highlighted components of successful university-community partnerships and sought to address questions of ownership, involvement, and commitment between the two entities. Bill and Colin's presentation entitled, "Using Documentary Methods to Build Partnerships," was an example of how a student project is being used to help the UMaine-Bangor COPC explore issues of affordable housing, aging, and health care for the Bangor area.



Bill Kuykendall
Senior Lecturer in New Media and
Cooperating Professor in the
Department of Communication
and Journalism

For Bill, there is unlimited power in combining the techniques of documentation (oral history, photojournalism, filmmaking, etc) and the community involvement that COPC offers. "Participants can be actively engaged as partners in self documentation—in telling not only their own stories, but the community's stories and those of the community-university partnership as well." As the UMaine-Bangor COPC project moves forward, Bill, his colleagues, and his students will continue to document the process as well as bring life to the hidden stories behind community issues. <http://newmedia.umaine.edu/generic.php?id=221>



Cheng-Li "Charlie" Liu,
Director, Powerhouse Teen Center,
Salvation Army

Partner Profile

Cheng-Li "Charlie" Liu grew up in the Bangor area and graduated from the University of Maine with a degree in New Media Studies. Since then, instead of taking off for a high-tech, high priced job out of state, Charlie has dedicated himself to serving youth in need of a little extra guidance.

For the past two years, Charlie has worked hard to create a safe and positive place for teens ages 13-18 years, to do homework, learn life skills, have fun, and just hang out—a place of their own. Inspired through his own experience, managing the Teen

Center has been more than just another job. “Mentors who extended a helping hand saved me when I was a teenager. Becoming a mentor myself is my way to ‘pay it forward.’”

Similarly, Charlie says that collaboration with UMaine on *Common Corner*, the COPC newsletter by youth and for youth, made sense. “I believe Bangor needs more positive things for teenagers to do. The newsletter, like the Teen Center, is an important outlet that helps to give kids a sense of place and identity.”

Located at the Salvation Army on 65 South Park Street in Bangor, Charlie has been grateful for the space, but he would like to be able to have a place to call their own. “There’s only so much space we can use, and limiting this also limits our programs. We would love to have more space for such activities as our game room, the art and study room, our Jam “Blue” room, and the gym.” In an effort to sustain these programs and possibly expand, Charlie, along with many community supporters have launched a capital campaign. The official kick-off began Friday June 1st with an Open House at the Teen Center. The goal is to raise \$50,000 from a combination of \$100 contributions, grant funding, and fundraising projects. Reaching our goal will require a serious commitment by the community. And, as Charlie points out, the campaign is also a prime life lesson in community service, “We hope this will help promote ownership among our members—to help teens give back to the community through community service projects and fundraisers.” <http://www.thepowerhouseteencenter.org/>



Upcoming Events

“Strengthening Universities and Communities through Engagement”

September 26, 2007

Morgan Hill Event Center, Hermon, ME

College faculty, administrators, professionals and community members are invited to attend a day-long conference at the Morgan Hill Event Center in Hermon, Maine on September 26th. The conference is sponsored by the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center and Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Maine, and the Maine Campus Compact.

The event will feature two nationally recognized experts in building, sustaining and evaluating community-university partnerships: Dr. Lorilee Sandmann from the University of Georgia, and Dr. Linda Silka, from the Center for Family, Work and Community at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell.

There will also be a Chancellor’s Roundtable on Community Engagement which will be moderated by UM System Chancellor, Dr. Richard Pattenaude.

Visit www.umaine.edu/mscs/COPC/confSUCTE.htm for more information.